

EXHIBIT B

Akron World Tour Artist jimmy Hayden

Words and interview by Zac Dubask



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hen the *More Than A Game* Tour rolled through its Akron stop, the artist chosen to design that city's Artist Series shoe not only had a personal relationship with LeBron, but a permanent one. Jimmy Hayden has tattooed much of LeBron's most recognized work, and we are now seeing more and more of his art appear around the League. After successfully creating Akron's Artist Series shoe, Hayden was then tapped to recreate some of the King's most notable ink on a series of mannequins that grace the Nike campus as well as NIKETOWN's worldwide. I caught up with Hayden at his newly opened Focused Tattoo shop in Cleveland Heights to talk about his work with LeBron, Nike and the path he took to get to where he's at today. As far as I'm concerned, if he's helping bring actual nice tattoos to the NBA hardwood, he's a friend of mine.



Zac Dubasik: How did you first get involved in the Artist Series project and the World Tour?

Jimmy Hayden: I guess from tattooing LeBron. I got a call from [a guy at] Nike; he asked me to do a shoe series. He described the *More Than A Game* Series and how they were looking for artists to do these new shoes that were coming out for LeBron. He kind of gave me the details and how to do it, and what they expected from each artist. I was just super overwhelmed that they would even call me. I thought it was a spectacular idea. So, they sent me the shoes, and it was on from there. I got this big, heavy box of three pairs of size 16 shoes. When I opened it up, it, of course, was the all-white shoes. They pretty much gave me free reign, and I was able to express them the way I wanted, and make them look the way I wanted.

How did you come up with the design that you actually put on the shoe?

They kind of gave us a few themes as far as what they wanted, but really just said to go with what I wanted. But my idea, since I have a close relationship with LeBron from tattooing him – I thought instantly that I would airbrush and design the shoe with the tattoos he has on his body. I thought that would make it way more personal and that it would be off the beaten path of what the other artists were going to do. And for me it would be more of a personal thing.

I know that you are into sneakers, but had you ever painted them before?

Yeah. Before I actually started tattooing, I had been airbrushing shoes for a lot of guys. They would come to me with a lot of Air Force 1s and ask me to airbrush their shoes, and I kind

of got into it. Of course, as tattooing took over my life, I kind of got away from it. So, this was a great opportunity for me to reinvent myself as far as designing on shoes. I thought it was a great idea to do. I had always been into shoes and was always drawing shoes back in fourth and fifth grade – I was always drawing Nikes.

Why do you think it was important to incorporate the communities through things like the Artist Series with the World Tour?

LeBron sets such a standard in each and everybody's lives, other than just [in] Akron and Cleveland. I think he has a huge impact all over, in every community. He was just a young guy that took the NBA by storm. And outside the NBA, he is so much more of a driven force on a lot of different levels. From coming out of a down economy like Akron and being able to blossom out of that, I think everyone kind of grasped a hold of what kind of person he is. I thought it was awesome for them to tap into each region that LeBron has been to and give them a shot to honor what he's done.

After doing the Artist Series project, how did you get involved in airbrushing the mannequins?

About a week after the shoe was done, and the *More Than A Game* Tour had taken off from Akron towards Beijing, I got a call that same week from [the guy at Nike] who had first called me about the shoes. He contacted me about this mannequin project. They thought there was no better guy to do these designs on the bodies than me, because I'd been tattooing him already. So, they figured they'd ask me to come out and airbrush the same tattoos I've done on him on these mannequins. I thought everything just fit



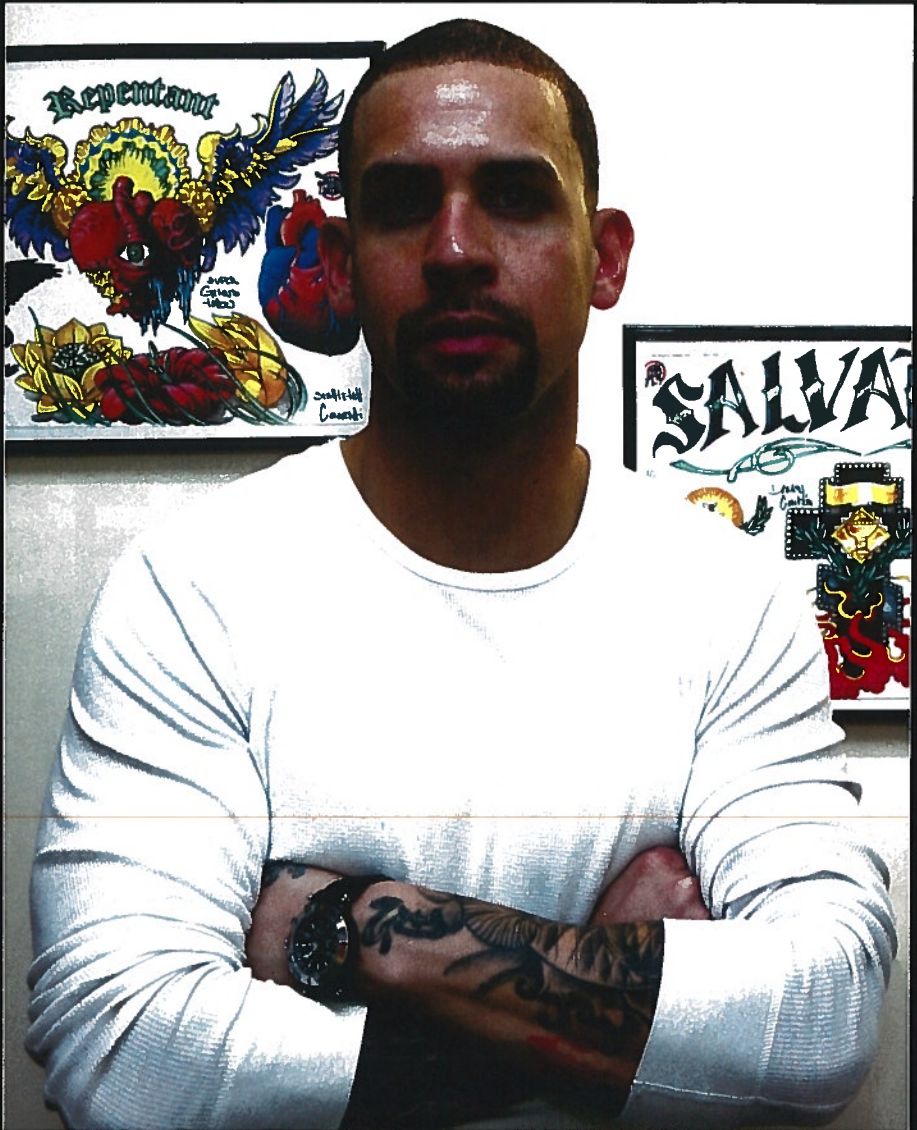
together and made sense. Of course I agreed to it wholeheartedly. I couldn't wait to get out there and start working on it. The first time I came out, I did two mannequins, and everybody loved them. They made a big video of it.

And how many mannequins total have you done now?

Ten all together, and I'm doing more still. I'm heading to Denver to do a new version of this mannequin — a different pose.

How did you first get involved in tattooing LeBron?

One of his friends, Rich [Paul, of the Four Horsemen and LRMR], gave me a call one time real late at night, and I didn't know who it was. I had been tattooing a guy named LeBron already. He was a football player, so I assumed it was the LeBron I had been tattooing for a while. But I was kind of wondering why someone else was calling for him, because usually he called, and he never called that late at night. So I said, "Yeah, come through around four o'clock tomorrow." Of course, four o'clock came around, and it was LeBron James. I was a little star struck and overly excited to do this tattoo, because I knew



“Of course, four o'clock came around, and it was LeBron James. I was a little star struck and overly excited to do this tattoo, because I knew I was going to give him something cool.”
—Jimmy Hayden

I was going to give him something cool. I had seen his tattoos prior to him coming to me, and they weren't all fixed up to what I thought they could be. It gave me a good shot to really give him a great tattoo. And from that point, we became good friends, and I've been tattooing him ever since.

What are some of the tattoos that you have done on LeBron that people are familiar with?

There's a lion on his right arm; on top of his shoulder it says "Gloria" with a crown; across his chest is a huge lion with wings, holding a shield that says "King" inside of it. On his right forearm there are angels and birds, doves flying around in clouds. On his left arm, on the top of the shoulder I did five stars like a five-star general. I re-did the panther that said "Beast." On his forearm it says "Bryce Maximus," his son's name real big ... a lot of filler and design on both arms. And anything he had done before he started coming to me, I reworked.

You've done work on a lot of other NBA players. Did that all come from people seeing your work on LeBron?

It seemed like everything kind of fell at the same time. ... I know I was starting to get into a lot of athletes before LeBron came in, like Ted Ginn. He is from Cleveland, and I tattooed him a lot. Of course it really snowballed once LeBron came in. A whole lot of athletes are starting to come to me now, all the way from the NBA to the NFL.

What has this whole experience been like for you?

Being able to go to the Nike campus out in Portland has just been a phenomenal thing. From stepping out as a small tattoo artist here in Cleveland, coming from this down economy and factory zone, and being able to do this stuff and be around these guys is just a great feeling. And finally opening this new shop in Cleveland Heights, it just doesn't seem to end. It feels like such an ongoing success for just a local Cleveland guy. It's neat to see it all pan out like it is. 🐾